

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 2939

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS SECRETARY FROM ASST SECRETARY ROGERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (HENRY A. KISSINGER), VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELA AND YOUR TRIP--ESCOVAR SALOM

BEGIN SUMMARY. FROM MY MEETINGS IN CARACAS SATURDAY WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, PRESIDENT PEREZ (SEE SEPTTEL) AND THEN ALONE WITH PEREZ (CAP) AND PRESIDENT RODRIQUEZ LARA OF ECUADOR (SEE SEPTTEL), I THINK CAP WILL SEE A VISIT BY YOU AS ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO CONSOLIDATE VENEZUELA'S POSITION AS CHALLENGER TO US LEADERSHIP IN THE HEMISPHERE. HE WILL MUTE HIS PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE US BEFORE AND DURING--INDEED, HIS RECENT MESSAGE TO CONGRESS IS A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT ALREADY ON HIS EARLY PRONOUNCEMENTS ABOUT THE US--BUT HE WILL GIVE YOU AN EARFUL PRIVATELY, ESPECIALLY ABOUT THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA. I DOUBT IF YOU WILL HEAR MUCH ABOUT CUBA OR SELA FROM HIM. BUT I RECKON NEVERTHELESS THAT THAT MEETING WILL BE THE SINGLE MOST INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT OF THE WHOLE TRIP. THE EYES OF THE HEMISPHERE WILL CERTAINLY BE ON CARACAS. END SUMMARY.

1. I MET WITH ESCOVAR SALOM FIRST FOR ABOUT FORTY-FIVE MINUTES. WE TOUCHED LIGHTLY ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR VISIT. HE SAID HE WILL CHECK WITH CAP TO SEE WHETHER A DATE AT THE END OF THE SECOND WEEK IN APRIL IS STILL CONVENIENT, BUT HE MADE CLEAR, IN HIS NON-FLAMBOYANT WAY, THAT THE GOV WILL WELCOME YOU.

2. ON THE OAS, ESCOVAR COMMENTED THAT THE JUST-COMPLETED IA

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ECOSOC MEETING IS A USEFUL PREPARATION FOR THE GENERAL

ASSEMBLY, THE DATE OF WHICH HE HOPES WILL NOW HOLD FIRM. HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE PRIOR DISCUSSIONS ON WHAT YOU AND THE OTHERS PLAN TO SAY AT THE OASGA ABOUT RESTRUCTURING. I GATHER HE IS ABOUT TO LAUNCH SOME OAS REFORMS OF CONSEQUENCE, SO THAT IT DEALS MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS. HE HAS BEEN TALKING WITH ECUADOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER LUCIO PAREDES IN THIS REGARD, DURING THE STATE VISIT OF PRESIDENT RODRIQUEZ LARA.

3. ON THE OAS SECRETARY GENERALSHIP, THE GOV IS NOT SHOWING ITS HAND YET, EITHER.

4. ESCOVAR COMMENTED ON THE HEMISPHERE. HE SEES TROUBLE (CAP'S PICTURE IS EVEN DARKER)--ARGENTINA IS UNPREDICTABLE, PERU IS A CAUSE FOR CONCERN, BRAZIL HAS DIFFICULT INTERNAL PROBLEMS (BUT VENEZUELA, HE OBSERVED, CANNOT AFFORD TO HAVE BAD RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL). ALL THIS PROVES THAT NON-DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS INEVITABLY HAVE PROBLEMS WITH LEGITIMACY.

5. EXCOVAR TOOK ISSUE WITH THE POINT IN YOUR SPEECH SUGGESTING THAT LATAM UNITES AROUND ANTI-AMERICANISM. VENEZUELA IS NOT ANTI-AMERICAN. LATIN AMERICA IS SIMPLY TRYING TO DEVELOP A NEW SYSTEM OF WORLD ECONOMIC RELATIONS. HE INFERRED THAT CAP'S MESSAGE TO THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS WAS A KIND OF ANSWER TO YOUR HOUSTON SPEECH; IN IT HE SAID THAT THERE WILL BE NO CONFRONTATION, BUT VENEZUELA IS DETERMINED TO PUSH ITS NEW IDEAS ABOUT THE WORLD. VENEZUELA'S BEHAVIOR AT THE ALGIERS OPEC CONFERENCE IS THE MODEL FOR WHAT IS TO COME, ESCOVAR SAID. A PITY, HE SUGGESTED, THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT LATIN AMERICA--BECAUSE, HE IMPLIED, WE WILL HAVE A LOT OF ADJUSTING TO DO.
ASENCIO

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O, MR. HOGANSON
3/16/75.

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